(c) the number of applications pending so far; and

(d) the measures contemplated by Government for the expeditious disposal of all pending applications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No. The Government endeavours to issue passports within six weeks provided the application is complete in all respects and a clear police verification report has been received. Passport Office, Jaipur is issuing passports within the prescribed time frame.

(b) The number of Passports issued to the applicants during the last three years and as on 28.2.2003 is as follows:—

Year	No. of Passport issued
2000	66480
2001	89232
2002	96840
2003 (upto 28.2.2003)	12509

(c) The number of Passport applications pending in Passport Office Jaipur as on 28.2.2003 is 3211.

(d) Several measures taken by the Government for the expeditious disposal of all pending applications include computerisation of Passport Offices, machine writing of passports, decentralisation of receipt of applications to district level, dispatch of passports by Speed Post and monitoring of the pendency situation in Passport Offices on a weekly basis.

Expenditure incurred by Indian Missions abroad

2390. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minsiter of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that lavish expenditure is being incurred by the Indian Missions abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last three years;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in many countries residences have been bought but no one has occupied them and his Ministry has itself admitted that there are irregularities in the system;

(d) if so, how the system is being made waterproof; and

(e) what immediate steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No. The expenditure in Indian Missions abroad is regulated in accordance with prescribed rules and regulations of the Government of India, and special requirements, if any.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Confrontation in United Nations on Iraq issue

2391. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the state has been set for an all-out confrontation in the United Nations, with the France keen on taking on Britain and the United States over the ongoing crisis in Iraq;

(b) if so, whether France has circulated specific proposals that would address the issue of disarmament in Iraq in a peaceful manner;

(c) whether India has also examined the proposal; and

(d) if so, to what extent India is fully supporting the French plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Issues relating to Iraq are currently under discussion in the UN Security Council. Alternative and divergent approaches have emerged, and are being considered by the members of the Security Council.

(c) and (d) India is vitally interested in the peace and prosperity of the Gulf region and has, therefore, consistently called for the resolution of the crisis relating to Iraq through political and diplomatic means under